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- Business
- Entertainment/GO!
- Life
- Opinion
- Death Notices
- Weather

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- Religion
- Out There
- Food
- Travel

Online Services
- Search Our Archives
- Classifieds
- Movie Guide
- Email Newsletters
- Online Forums
- Send a Postcard
- Newspaper Ads Online
- Yellow Pages
- Pay Your Bill Online

Special Reports
- War in Iraq
- Tsunami Coverage
- Air Force Academy
- Denver Broncos
- CC Hockey
- Drought Coverage

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Headlines

Jan. 21, 2005

The other side: gay church's take on SpongeBob debate

By KERRY McGINLEY - THE GAZETTE

While some may target elements of popular culture like SpongeBob, Tinky-Winky or Batman and Robin for promoting a homosexual lifestyle, some scholars and clergy point to the Bible itself for stories of homosexual relationships between major Biblical figures.

The Metropolitan Community Church is a "progressive Christian church with a ministry for all but an outreach to gay, lesbian, trans-gendered and bi-sexual community and anyone who feels marginalized in society," said the Rev. Nori Rost of the Pikes Peak MCC.

The MCC Web site hosts an article by the Rev. Nancy L. Wilson, a member of the Metropolitan Community Churches Board of Elders, that re-examines the relationships between Ruth and Naomi and Jonathan and David, among others.

Wilson describes the story of Ruth as a romance, but one between Ruth and Naomi rather than Ruth and Boaz. She describes their story as "the most moving promise of relational fidelity between two persons in all of the Bible." She references Ruth 1:16, where Ruth says to Naomi: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whether thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

Wilson questions the nature of Ruth and Naomi's bond: "Did Ruth and Naomi have a lesbian relationship? There's no way to know, but it is clear the two women had a lifelong, passionate, committed relationship celebrated in scripture."

The legendary friendship between the future King David and Jonathan, King Saul's son, was also likely a sexual one, according to Wilson. "This tragic triangle of passion, jealousy and political intrigue between Saul, Jonathan and David leads to one of the most direct expressions of same-sex love in the Bible: 'I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women.' (II Samuel 1:26)"

To read Wilson's full article, go to www.mccchurch.org.

Rost of the local MCC said that the Bible should be read with an understanding of the times it was written in and who it was written for. Scriptures that condemn homosexual acts were actually targeting pagan sex rites, she said.

"They don't deal with homosexuality (in and of itself)," she said. "They don't have any bearing on two men falling in love or two women falling in love and wanting to raise a family."

Even the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is misconstrued, she said. God was planning to destroy the two cities before any sexual violence was attempted against the angels visiting Lot, she said, and the mob's threats are not indicative of a modern gay lifestyle.

"Certainly it wasn't about two guys showing up at the door and asking these two angels out on a date," she said, referring to Genesis 19.

Scriptural interpretation aside, Focus on the Family's fear of SpongeBob is misplaced, she said.

"If you believe in a god of justice and righteousness who will protect you, surely he will protect you and your children from an evil cartoon," she said. "Cannot God protect them from SpongeBob?"

Rost argues that preaching from fear is the last thing Jesus would do.

"That's where Focus on the Family is missing the boat," she said. "They do a lot of good, but when they come from a place of fear of what is different, what is marginalized, they completely miss the point of Jesus' message, which is, 'you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.'"

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